

Message Text

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PAGE 01 MANILA 09470 080754Z

13

ACTION EA-14

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 AID-20 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03

INR-11 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-07 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SP-03

SS-20 USIA-15 OMB-01 DRC-01 /112 W

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R 080719Z AUG 74

FM AMEMBASSY MANILA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5885

C O N F I D E N T I A L MANILA 9470

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: EAID, MASS, PINT, RP

SUBJECT: RELIGIOUS PRISONERS

REF: A. MANILA 9117

B. HULEN EA/PHL JULY 24 LETTER

1. FATHER ORTIZ, CHAIRMAN OF NASSA JUSTICE AND PEACE COMMITTEE, GAVE EMBASSY AUG 7 FURTHER CLARIFICATION ON RELEASE OF RELIGIOUS PRISONERS.

2. RELEASE THAT OCCURRED JULY 30 INCLUDED FOUR PROTESTANTS: REV. TIPLES, AND MR. AND MRS. SANTIAGO OF NATIONAL COUNCIL OF CHURCHES, PASTOR TORIBIO CAJIVAT OF METHODIST CHURCH AND FOUR CATHOLICS: FATHER HAGAD, FORMER NUN CONSUELO LEDESMA, FORMER JESUIT HILARIO LIM AND LASALLE BROTHER SAMUEL BUESER (FILIPINO).

3. REMAINING RELIGIOUS PRISONERS UNDER DETENTION ARE PROTESTANT REVS. HURPADA AND CESAR TAGUBA, SACRED HEART PRIESTS JALANDONI, TAN AND ABAO, AND ONE PRIEST, FATHER NACU, WHO HAS ESCAPED DETENTION AND IS AT LARGE. IMPRESSION WAS GIVEN THESE WERE ONLY RELIGIOUS PRISONERS REMAINING UNDER DETENTION CONDITIONS. ACCORDING TO ORTIZ, PRESIDENT HAD INTENDED RELEASE ALL RELIGIOUS PRISONERS BUT HIS ORDER HAD BEEN TRANSLATED BY GENERAL VER TO MEAN ALL EXCEPT
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PAGE 02 MANILA 09470 080754Z

THOSE CHARGED WITH POSSESSION OF FIREARMS, A CRIMINAL

CHARGE. ORTIZ IS OPTIMISTIC ALL WILL SOON BE RELEASED.

4. COMMENT: EMBASSY WILL CONTINUE TO ATTEMPT TO VERIFY RELIGIOUS PRISONER STATUS. ORTIZ HAS VERY DIRECT INTEREST IN MATTER, HOWEVER, AND HIS ASSERTION RE RELIGIOUS NUMBERS REMAINING UNDER DETENTION CAN PROBABLY BE ACCEPTED AS ROUGHLY CORRECT. IF ORTIZ'S INTERPRETATION OF PRESIDENT'S INTENT ACCURATE, GOP EVIDENTLY CARRYING OUT PRECAUTIONARY HOUSE CLEANING ON ONE SEGMENT OF POLITICAL PRISONER ISSUE TO AVOID FUTURE CRITICISM. THIS ACTION, OF COURSE, NO GUARANTEE THAT MORE CHURCH-STATE PROBLEMS WILL NOT ARISE BUT IT DOES CONSTITUTE TIMELY TACTICAL MOVE DOMESTICALLY AS WELL AS INTERNATIONALLY.
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